



Glitter lighting from MK Illuminations

Discover a hidden land

words by Abby Warn of Light IQ

As the last of the summer light slowly fades, we must find new ways of lighting our gardens to take advantage of the features that come hand in hand with the winter months. Bleak landscapes, a lack of colour and fewer daylight hours all lead to a lacklustre garden.

Instead of allowing your exterior to shy away in deference to the overly colourful and Christmas-lit interior, let it shine by creating a twinkling magical view to be admired from the warmth of an over-looking sitting room.

When creating a beautiful and inspirational lighting scheme for your garden, remember that it will need to be altered slightly in order to suit each season appropriately. Where delicate flowerbed uplighters are perfect for summer illumination, during the barren winter months you will want to avoid highlighting deserted areas and concentrate on the more 'winter-orientated' features of your garden, such as using bare

flora for dramatic shadowing. If you have yet to light your garden, replace the black-hole effect that stares back at you from every window by creating a stylish winter wonderland with some simple techniques. Winter garden lighting not only lends itself to a picturesque landscape; it enables you to make the most of what you have by extending the feeling of space and providing a wonderful sense of contentment, allowing you to enjoy your garden more fully.

Temporary garden decoration at this time of year normally involves festive-themed illuminations and strings of fairy lights, however so much more can be achieved by refusing to comply with the norm and stepping your lighting efforts up a notch. Achieve an enviable sparkling sensation by illuminating a stark tree with glitter lights from trunk to tip, or turn a large ever-green into an outdoor Christmas tree by draping it with a bright white curtain of fairy lights that will glitter in the surrounding snow, creating an impressive feature in any garden.

These lights are safe, easy to use and incredibly adaptable, allowing you to create a feature from almost any object within your garden such as a bench, fence or statue. Using an LED version of these lights can provide a whole spectrum of single or multi colour-changing effects, either static or moving, which will last for months. White or coloured rope lighting can be used to accentuate the harsh architectural lines that winter offers, creating patterns, outlining features or by illuminating a pathway within your garden.

The festive season is the one time of the year where the lighting mantra 'less is more' can be put to one side, but do remember that a simple smattering of white lights strategically placed around a garden can sometimes be more appropriate than flooding the exterior of your home with colourful and flickering bulbs. As with every lighting scheme, no matter how temporary, the blanket approach of 'one-size-fits-all' should be avoided with appropriate



Swarovski crystal lights from Light IQ



Light curtain by MK Illuminations

winter lighting does not need to rely upon fairy lights and attention-capturing effects in order to be a success



Moonlighting effect by Light IQ

types and levels of light being applied to each project individually.

Of course winter lighting does not need to rely upon fairy lights and attention-capturing effects in order to be a success. More permanent lighting features can be introduced with wonderful results and will also last through the entire season without looking out of place.

The main idea behind exterior lighting is either to re-create natural illumination with subtlety, or to provide dramatic viewpoints by highlighting stark wintry features. When the fairy light rule of 'the more the merrier' is not being implemented, you should aim to apply the minimum amount of light possible in order to avoid creating an artificial atmosphere by flooding the whole garden. The beautiful dappling light from a full moon glistening

across a snowy garden creating strong shadows and silhouettes, can be recreated with astonishing similarity by using a 'moonlighter' placed high in a tree. The light source itself is obscured and only the effect will be seen, dancing through the branches and gently illuminating your garden with a natural glow. Spotting from above or below is a wonderful way of creating a dramatic feature; imagine a bleak frosty night-time garden featuring a dominating spruce tree, spot lit from below, against a stone wall backdrop causing the eye to be drawn outside to this magical garden scene. Another way of feature-lighting your garden is by using Swarovski crystal bulbs that exaggerate the cut of the crystal by enhancing star-like patterns on the surrounding surface. This lighting feature is a great year-round addition to any garden, as its festive nature appeals during frosty winter months while also providing a point of interest and conversation at summertime BBQ's.

Whichever way you decide to light your garden this winter season; temporarily, permanently, over or under stated, remember to use all the space you have in order to maximise the effect. Outdoor lighting effects can be easily achieved with minimal disruption and expense, but have the power to stir deep-rooted emotions of romance and magic within us all. Enlighten your exterior and discover what lies beyond.

**Light IQ, 1 Rylett Studios,
77 Rylett Crescent, London. W12 9RP
Tel: 0208 749 1900
www.lightiq.com
Lighting design, supply and installation**